

# WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS

A Monthly Digest of War Department Studies on the Attitudes of American Troops



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|---|----|
| WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH .....                               | 1  |
| TRANSFERS TO INFANTRY: A SPECIAL PROBLEM .....                | 4  |
| ATTITUDES TOWARD MEN WHO "CRACK" IN BATTLE ....               | 7  |
| A CHECK LIST OF COMPANY LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ....             | 8  |
| WORRIES OF COMBAT TROOPS .....                                | 10 |
| MORALE ATTITUDES OF<br>SUPERIOR INFANTRYMEN IN TRAINING ..... | 12 |
| "BLACK SHEEP" IN BATTLE .....                                 | 14 |
| SOLDIERS IN OUTLYING BASES .....                              | 15 |

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# WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH . . .

. . . Soldiers in battle call on prayer, thoughts of home and their buddies,  
and hatred for the enemy to help them get through

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Source: Study of Infantry officers in two divisions--one with combat experience in the Mediterranean and one with combat experience in the Pacific and Infantry enlisted men in a division with combat experience in the Pacific.

Fear is the soldier's constant companion. It is at his elbow when he moves into action. It shares his foxhole when he is pinned down by enemy fire. It hovers over his gun position even when there is a lull in battle. When the going gets tough, fear is a stubborn enemy he must conquer.

The heroes are no more immune to fear than are the run-of-the-mill soldiers. Combat veterans say that the soldier who claims he has never been afraid is a braggart, a liar, or both. The wise and courageous soldier makes this adjustment: *He finds means of overcoming fear before it overcomes him.*

How can fear in combat be overcome? There are many methods according to combat veterans who have met the enemy under the ugliest of conditions on fronts ranging from the Tunisian desert to the South Pacific islands. One of the methods is concerned with *thought*; in the long run, the combat soldier defeats fear by sheer strength of mind, by thinking thoughts that will help him get through when the going gets tough.

What the soldier thinks about when things look black on the battlefield depends on such factors as his general background, his military experiences, his attitude toward the war, and his belief in God. Officers are more likely to think of certain things than are their men, for example. And soldiers fighting Japs are more likely to think of certain things than are soldiers fighting Germans.

## CONCERN FOR OTHER MEN'S WELFARE HELPS A LOT

Officers and men were asked the following question:

*"Many men report that thinking about certain things helps them get through when the going gets tough. Soldiers with different types of experience have different views. What would you say on the basis of your experience?"*

They were then given a check list of five kinds of thoughts and asked to rate each thought as to whether--and how much--these thoughts helped them when the going was tough. (See chart on page 3.)

Most frequently mentioned thought among officers is that they *"couldn't let the other men down."* As might be expected, this concern is very strong among them, because they are called upon to set an example for their men to follow in combat. Fully 85 per cent of the officers studied in the Pacific and 77 per cent of the officers studied in the Mediterranean say that such thinking helped a lot when the going got tough.

Even among enlisted men, this concern with their buddies' fate is very strong, more than half of them saying it helped them a lot during tough going. Only a small percentage of both officers and men say that such thoughts didn't occur to them.

## PRAYER IS A GREAT HELP

The judgment that *"there are no atheists in foxholes"* is close to the truth, if one is to examine the statements of officers and men on the power of prayer to help banish fear.

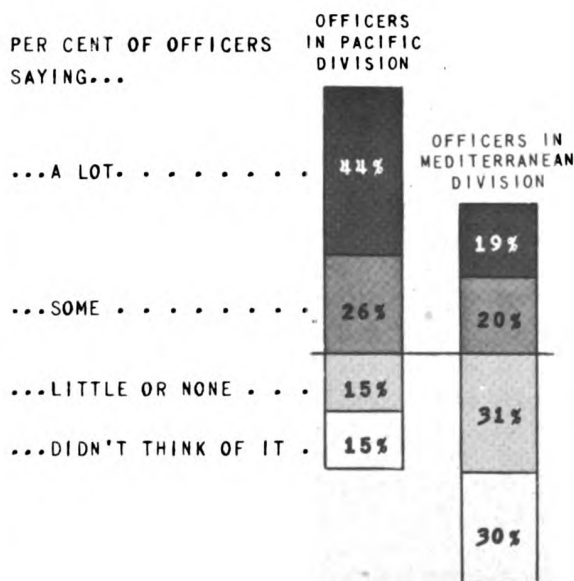
Prayer is more likely to be a help to enlisted men than to officers, but

even among officers, a majority from both theaters say that it helped them a lot when the going was tough. *Almost two out of three* enlisted men say the same and less than one man in five says the thought of prayer never occurred to him. Among officers, one in four says he never thought of it.

### HATRED FOR THE ENEMY

Hatred for the enemy--a concept which many consider a powerful battle incentive--is often called into play by officers and men when the going gets tough. There is a vast difference, however, in the amount of help hatred provides among men fighting the Japanese and men fighting the Germans.

QUESTION: "When the going was tough, how much were you helped by thoughts of hatred for the enemy?"



### THOUGHTS OF GETTING HOME AGAIN

Concentration on the job at hand--dirty though it is--is a method many officers and men use to see them through the worst situations in combat. The job must be done if the men are to get home again--regardless of other reasons--and this thought proves a powerful support to many officers and men.

Among the Pacific division officers 50 per cent say that the thought that the job had to be finished if they were to get home again helped a lot when the going was tough. Thirty-nine per cent of the Mediterranean division officers and 38 per cent of the Pacific division enlisted men concur with this statement. Roughly one in four says that such thoughts did not occur to him.

Thoughts of what they were fighting for are also helpful to many officers and men when battle pressure is severe. Enlisted men are more likely to find such thoughts helpful than are officers. Enlisted men are also more likely to have such thoughts when the going is tough.

### COMPARISON OF MORE CONFIDENT AND LESS CONFIDENT SOLDIERS

Another interesting note on this matter of adjustment to trying battle situations is the following: Enlisted men who gain in confidence the more times they go into action are more likely to be helped by the above mentioned thoughts when things get bad than are men whose confidence decreases as they see more and more action.

Thoughts of their buddies' welfare, getting home again, hatred for the enemy, and belief in mission are more likely to prove very helpful to soldiers whose confidence increases as they see more and more action. Only prayer proves as helpful to less-confident soldiers as it does to their more confident buddies.

Certainly a good part of the reason why some men's confidence increases as their battle experience increases is that they are better able to weather nervous and emotional storms at the front. This strength may well be due, in part, to the help they get from thinking of things above and beyond themselves. The soldier who thinks of getting the job done, of not letting his buddies down, of the help he can get from God is less likely to crack for personal reasons when the going gets tough. He is bolstered against shocks that might otherwise destroy him.

## HOW SOLDIERS WHO HAVE FOUGHT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMBAT FEAR

QUESTION: "Many men report that thinking about certain things helps them get through when going gets tough. Soldiers with different types of experience have different views. What would you say on the basis of your experience?"

### WHEN THE GOING WAS TOUGH...

PER CENT OF OFFICERS AND MEN WHO CHECK:

...HOW MUCH DID IT HELP YOU TO THINK THAT YOU HAD  
TO FINISH THE JOB IN ORDER TO GET HOME AGAIN?



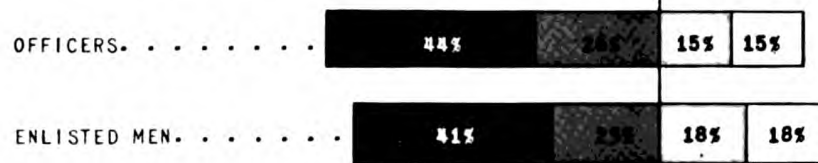
...HOW MUCH DID IT HELP YOU TO THINK THAT YOU  
COULDN'T LET THE OTHER MEN DOWN?



...HOW MUCH DID IT HELP YOU TO THINK OF WHAT WE  
ARE FIGHTING FOR?



...HOW MUCH WERE YOU HELPED BY THOUGHTS OF HATRED  
FOR THE ENEMY?



...HOW MUCH DID PRAYER HELP YOU?



# TRANSFERS TO INFANTRY: A SPECIAL PROBLEM

## A discussion of the attitudes of Infantry replacements from overseas, ASTP and the Air Corps

*Source: Study of several Infantry divisions in Continental United States.*

Mass transfers of men to Infantry outfits now in training in the U.S. have confronted Infantry company commanders with new problems calling for immediate solution.

Men being reassigned to Infantry from other outfits come largely from the following sources:

1. Men back from overseas service.
2. Men from other branches, especially the Air Corps.
3. Men from ASTP units which have been disbanded.

Diverse as their backgrounds are, these men have several things in common. Most of all, they share a dislike for their new assignments. They are reluctant transfers at best, many of them feeling that the Army is not giving them a fair deal by taking them out of their old assignments and throwing them into Infantry.

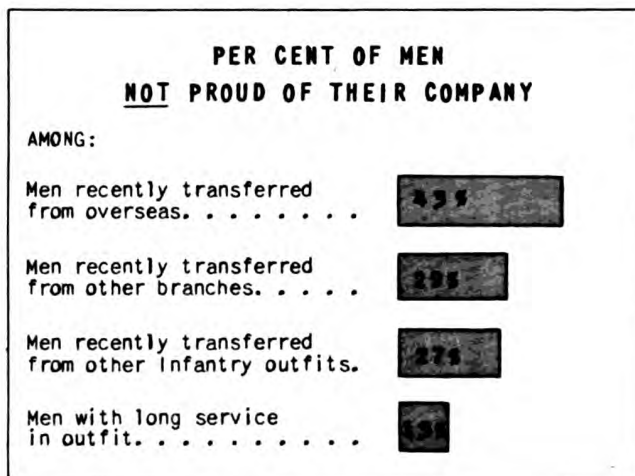
Since they enter the Infantry with bad attitudes about Infantry, there is real danger that their entry will have bad effect on the esprit of their new outfits. Old Infantry men often look upon them with suspicion and dislike anyhow, and the situation is aggravated when the new men fail to adjust. This problem is likely to increase rather than decrease.

### WHAT NEW MEN THINK OF THEIR OUTFITS

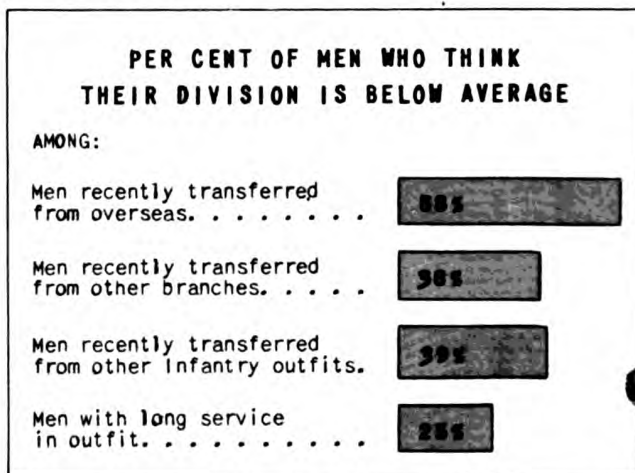
Combat veterans recently returned from overseas and assigned to Infantry and men recently reassigned to Infantry from other branches tend to have less pride in their new outfit and less re-

spect for its ability than do older Infantrymen. This lack of pride and respect stems in large measure from the super-critical attitudes these men carry over when they are transferred.

The figures below are based on a study of relatively recent members and "old timers" in two Infantry divisions nearing completion of training in the U.S.



The same situation holds true among men who think their division is poorer than average.



## ATTITUDES OF TRANSFERS FROM OVERSEAS

Overseas personnel now being assigned to Infantry outfits training in the states are very often battle veterans who have been rotated out of their outfits or rehabilitated for active duty after suffering wounds in action.

These men are highly critical of their new outfits. Having had actual combat experience, they often feel that they know more about fighting a war than those officers and noncoms who have never been closer to combat than field problems and maneuvers.

In addition, they are viewed with suspicion by some officers and men in their new outfits. Officers are sometimes prone to fear these combat veterans who might very well "show them up" in the eyes of the men.

This situation is made even more serious by the fact that the overseas transfers are very likely to have built up false expectations. Many of them resent not getting lengthy furloughs before being reassigned. Others resent not being assigned to stations near their homes. Still others feel that they are entitled to jobs as instructors in their new outfits and thus resent being retrained for the same kind of combat jobs they've already performed overseas.

## ATTITUDES OF ASTP TRANSFERS

In recent weeks, nearly 100,000 ASTP students have been transferred to Ground Forces units--mainly Infantry. That these men's attitudes and previous military backgrounds make them a special problem for Infantry commanders can readily be seen from the following figures:

**67%** of them think other soldiers resent the good deal they had in going to college under the ASTP set-up.

**60%** of them think their ASTP training will be of absolutely no use to the Infantry.

**47%** of them still think that the Army has a lot of assignments open on which they could use their skills

and that Infantry assignments are thus unnecessary.

**63%** of them think they will not have good promotion possibilities in the Infantry because the better jobs are already filled.

**73%** of them think that their transfer to Infantry will not assist their advancement in the Army.

Despite the handicaps of the above attitudes, most ASTP men are potentially valuable soldiers. Their fundamental outlook on the war is healthy. Even though they look with distaste on the Infantry, fully 87 per cent of them admit the Infantry is of great or greatest importance in winning the war. Desire to see action is also strong among them, with 67 per cent wanting to go overseas. Perhaps their greatest asset is their youth and intelligence. They were originally selected for ASTP training because they stood out from the general run of soldiers.

## ATTITUDES OF TRANSFERS FROM AIR CORPS

Large numbers of the men being transferred to Infantry from other branches in the U.S. are Air Corps "washouts," many of whom were washed out through no fault of their own. These men's attitudes are determined in large measure by the fact that they are being transferred out of the Air Corps--the Army's most popular branch--into one of the least popular branches--the Infantry.

Studies have shown that 75 per cent of Air Corps men prefer their branch to any other. This compares to less than 3 per cent of Air Corps men who prefer Infantry.

Many men object to Infantry service on the grounds that it would not give them a chance to do the kind of work they can do best and that it would not give them training for better jobs after the war. These same reasons are high on the list of reasons given for preferring the Air Corps. On only one reason will men who prefer Air Corps and

Infantry agree: they think that both branches are important in winning the war.

#### WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE PROBLEM?

Each of the three groups of transfers into Infantry has much to offer the Infantry in terms of qualifications, experience, and intelligence. They make up such a potentially valuable addition to our Infantry forces that they are deserving of special attention by their company commanders.

A vast majority of these men are convinced that the Infantry is doing a vital job. But they do need orientation which is aimed at convincing them of the importance of *their* doing that job. By and large, the problem of assimilating them into the Infantry becomes one of effective *orientation*.

An idea of what can be done about helping these replacements adjust to the Infantry can be gathered from the program now in operation in one division in the U.S. In this division new replacements are given special consideration. The division policy is to recognize that their adjustment depends as much on the attitudes of the men who have served a long time with the division toward them as it does on their own attitudes toward the division.

Upon arrival, the men are separated into small groups and interviewed at division headquarters. Results of these interviews are then forwarded to unit commanders to give them a better understanding of the attitudes and problems of the men.

On the basis of these problems and attitudes, a division-wide program of orientation is in operation to convince the men that they still have a chance for advancement and that every effort is being made to assign them properly. In addition, the following points are stressed:

1. That their assignment to Infantry was a military necessity;
2. That Infantry jobs have an importance above and beyond the skills they call for;
3. That Infantry benefits from their skills and that there are jobs in Infantry that make use of even the highest intelligence and finest skills.

While the above is only suggestive, it does indicate the magnitude of the problem and steps that can be taken to solve it. Any officer facing the same problem who takes similar steps should find that the esprit and effectiveness of his command will improve correspondingly.

## Reactions of Soldiers to the Film, "The Negro Soldier"

The WD film, "*The Negro Soldier*," which was produced to depict the Negro soldier's contribution to the war effort, is now available for general distribution throughout the Army.

To find men's reaction to the film, it was previewed before two groups of soldiers--one Negro, one white. The groups were chosen so as to represent, insofar as possible, groups comparable to the Negro and white Army populations. Their reactions are thus representative of Negro and white soldiers generally.

Both Negro and white soldiers were enthusiastic about the film, nine-tenths of the Negroes and two-thirds of the whites saying they "*liked it very much*." There was less than 10 per cent difference between Southern and Northern whites in the percentage liking the film.

In addition to liking the film, most soldiers think it gives a true picture of the activities of the Negro soldier. Less than 3 per cent of the Negroes and 5 per cent of the whites think the film is mostly untrue or one-sided.

# ATTITUDES TOWARD MEN WHO "CRACK" IN BATTLE

**Most officers and men say the soldier who goes "haywire"  
is sick and should be treated accordingly**

*Source: Study of company-grade officers and men in an Infantry division which saw action in the Pacific and officers in an Infantry division which saw action in the Mediterranean theater.*

Enemy weapons do not account for all our casualties in this global war. Mental crack-ups brought on by the strain of pounding under fire and the fact that line soldiers are subjected to the roughest kind of experience--both physical and emotional--are responsible for large numbers of losses.

What should be done with men who crack up mentally, who "blow their tops"? Are these victims of the "screaming meemies" genuinely incapacitated by their "breaking down" just as surely as if they were actual battle casualties or are they cowards and fakers who act "haywire" just to get out of combat?

Officers with combat experience against both the Japs and Germans and

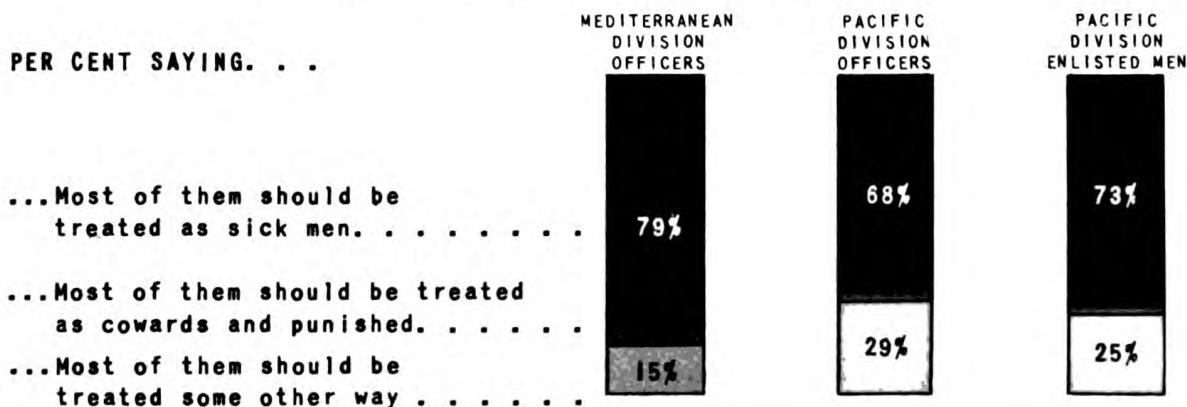
enlisted men who have fought the Japs were asked their opinion on how mental crack-up cases should be treated. These officers and men had seen the "screaming meemies" hit their buddies under fire.

It is significant that an overwhelming proportion of them say that soldiers who crack up mentally should be treated as sick men. Only a relative handful say such soldiers are cowards and should therefore be punished.

Because mental crack-up cases cease to be effective combat soldiers and because they must be pulled out of the line and replaced by other troops, they are battle casualties in a very real sense. Experience has shown that with proper treatment as many as 60 to 80 per cent of them can be returned to action under ideal conditions. Under ordinary circumstances, an average of 30 to 50 per cent of them are so rehabilitated at the present time.

## HOW OFFICERS AND MEN THINK MENTAL CRACK-UP CASES SHOULD BE TREATED

QUESTION: "In your opinion what should be done with men who crack up in action, that is, men who get shell-shocked, blow their tops, go haywire? (Check the one answer that comes nearest to what you think should be done with them.)"



# A CHECK LIST OF COMPANY LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Source: Study of company practices among 34 ASF companies in Continental United States.

How close is the relationship between company leadership practices and company morale?

The answer is that the relationship is close, indeed. This answer is backed by the results of a study just completed

of company practices and morale among a group of 34 companies stationed in Continental U.S.

The chart below shows how the men in 12 selected ASF companies answered 18 questions about company leadership practices in their own outfits. Six of the companies were all rated *high* in morale by all three of the following: Their

(✓) indicates companies in which 2/3 or more of the men express favorable opinions of each practice.

The six companies

| COMPANY PRACTICE:  | O | P | C |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Officers interested in men                                      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. Officers understand men's needs                                 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3. Officers are helpful to men                                     | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4. Officers recognize men's abilities                              | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. Officers are willing to back men up                             | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| 6. Fair share of off-duty time given men                           | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7. Men given authority to do their jobs                            | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8. Best use made of training time                                  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9. Fair furlough and pass policy                                   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10. Fair promotion policy  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11. Good selection of noncoms                                      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12. Satisfactory sports and athletic facilities                    | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 13. Satisfactory recreational facilities                           | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 14. Satisfactory orientation on progress and background of the war | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 15. Officers give talks on importance of outfit's job              | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 16. Personal talks by officers on men's progress                   |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| 17. Men given opportunity to know the "why" of things              | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 18. Punishment meted out fairly                                    | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

# SHIP PRACTICES

The chart below shows the relationship between company practices and morale

post or battalion commander, their company officers and their enlisted men. The other six companies were all rated low in morale by corresponding judges. The companies rated highest in morale by these judges are favorably rated by their own men on nearly all company practices. Those rated lowest fare very poorly in this respect.

Space is provided below in which you can rate your own outfit on the 18 company practices rated by the men. For each practice, try to estimate whether two-thirds of the men in your outfit would rate it favorably. Compare the pattern of checks you get for your company with those of the high morale companies on the left.

highest in morale

Rate your own  
company here

The 6 companies rated lowest in morale

|   |   |   |  |  |  | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| / |   | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / |   | ✓ |  |  |  |   | ✓ |   |   | ✓ |   |
| / | ✓ |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / |   | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| / |   |   |  |  |  |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
|   |   | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
|   |   | ✓ |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| / | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| / |   |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |

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# WORRIES OF COMBAT TROOPS

Concerns about health, home problems, and the post-war world  
trouble many officers and men

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*Source: Study of combat veteran officers and men in a division from the Pacific.*

War breeds worry. Officers and men who are thousands of miles from home, living and fighting under heart-breaking and nerve-wracking conditions, worry both about immediate battle problems and home problems back in the states.

Concern about relatives and friends at home plagues the combat soldier as does the ever-present concern for his own life. He worries about the peace to come and about his future after that peace.

To the officer, knowledge of the things his men worry about is essential to effective leadership. Worry saps a man's working and fighting efficiency. Anything an officer can do to alleviate worry in his command will pay off in a better fighting outfit.

The Army has done much to help solve the soldier's home problems while he is in the service. The effect of government dependency allotments is readily seen from the fact that only a small percentage of enlisted men say they are worried about financial matters. Undoubtedly, the Red Cross and Army Emergency Relief have also been effective in this respect.

Various other worries common to many soldiers can probably be solved partially through stepped-up and properly presented orientation. Through orientation, many of the soldiers' concerns about his place in the post-war scheme of things and whether the U.S. will achieve the objectives for which it is fighting can be eliminated. (As the chart on the opposite page shows, such concerns rank high among the worries of both officers and enlisted men.)

## HOW THE WORRIES OF OFFICERS AND MEN COMPARE

That officers and enlisted men differ in the things they are likely to worry most about is evident from even a hasty glance at the chart.

Officers are more likely than men to worry most about the following matters:

1. What is going to happen to them after the war.
2. The way they are getting along in the Army.
3. What will happen in the U.S. after the war.
4. News about national events in the U.S.
5. Purely personal matters.

Enlisted men are more likely to worry most about the following matters:

1. Their health.
2. The physical danger they might be faced with before the war ends.
3. Not knowing what is going to happen next.
4. Whether the U.S. will get what it is fighting for.

Both enlisted men and officers are equally likely to worry most about the following matters:

1. Being a long way from home.
2. Matters concerning their families or friends back home.
3. The progress of the war.
4. Financial matters (practically no worry to either).

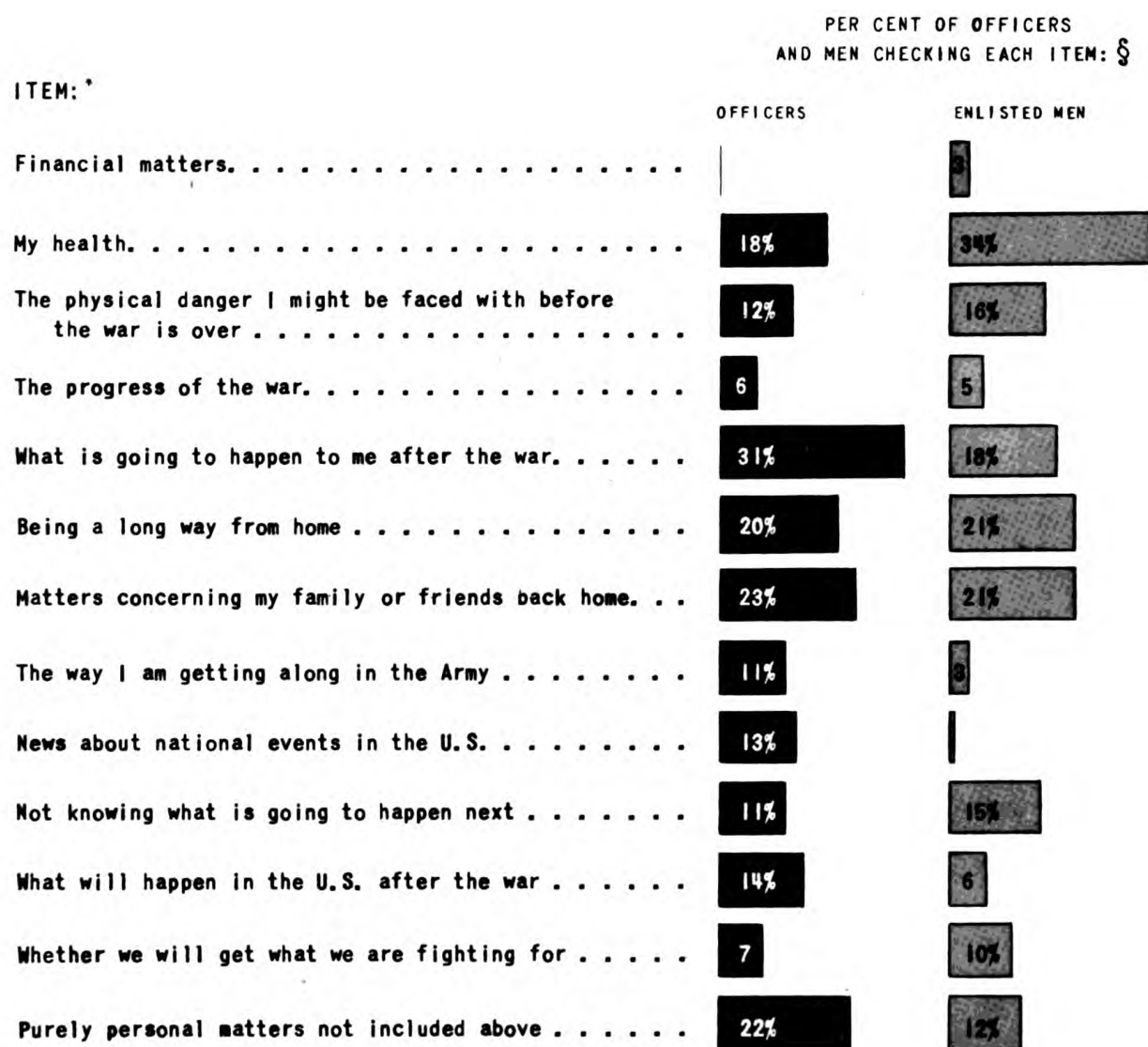
The above list is based only on those items officers and men worry most about. It is in no way representative of the total number of items which cause them great or little concern.

It should also be remembered that the worries listed in the chart below are typical only of officers and men with combat experience. Men's concern with health and danger, for example, is not nearly so strong among non-combat troops

stationed in an inactive theater overseas. It is only natural that combat duty intensifies these factors, just as being overseas intensifies men's concern about the progress of events back home.

## WORRIES OF COMBAT OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN

QUESTION: "During the past month which two of the following have worried or bothered you most?" (Check only two)



§ Percentages do not add to 200 as some officers and men failed to check two items.

\* Items are listed in the order in which they appeared on the original questionnaire.

# MORALE ATTITUDES OF SUPERIOR INFANTRYMEN IN TRAINING

**Infantry privates who are later promoted to line NCO's  
tend to have been superior in morale attitudes**

*Source: Study of privates in two regiments of an Infantry division in Continental U.S.*

Here is a situation which often confronts the Infantry line officer. The officer surveys the columns of recruits who have been assigned to his outfit for training. These recruits have been rounded up from many sections of the country; they stem from a variety of backgrounds.

The officer looks them over and thinks: *"A few short months from now, some of these basic privates will be squad, section and platoon noncoms. These men will stand out."*

The months go by and some of the basic privates have blossomed out with new stripes. In what ways did they stand out? The fact that they were promoted to positions of leadership and responsibility is, in the main, proof of the fact that they were considered to be superior soldiers. What, then, was the secret of their success?

Some of their success was due, of course, to their superior mastery of the basic skills of the Infantryman. In addition, however, it is likely that their *morale attitudes* also contributed. This idea is borne out by a study among Infantry privates in two regiments of a division in the U.S. which reveals striking differences between the morale attitudes of privates who were destined to be promoted to line NCO's and those who were not.

For the purposes of the study, the men were questioned during their first few weeks in the Army and the results of the study were then filed away until some months later. They were then reviewed to see how the morale attitudes

of men who rated promotions compared with those of other men. Though it thus became necessary to identify the men individually, their anonymity was protected from all but the members of the research staff working on the study.

The study shows that the privates destined to become NCO's were likely to differ from their buddies in the following attitudes:

1. They tended to be better-disciplined.
2. They tended to have more self-confidence.
3. They were more likely to feel that what they were doing in the Army is worthwhile.
4. They tended to have a more favorable attitude toward their officers.
5. They tended to have a more favorable attitude toward their noncoms.

## THE SUPERIOR INFANTRYMAN TENDED TO BE BETTER DISCIPLINED

QUESTION: "Do you feel that the Army is trying to control you and other soldiers more strictly than it needs to?"

PER CENT SAYING "NO"...

...Among Privates who  
were destined to  
become line NCO's

74%

...Among other Privates

42%

**THE SUPERIOR INFANTRYMAN TENDED TO HAVE MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE**

QUESTION: "If you were sent into actual fighting after one year of training, how do you think you would do?"

PER CENT SAYING "ALL RIGHT" OR "I'D HAVE TROUBLE AT FIRST BUT WOULD DO O.K. LATER"...

...Among Privates who were destined to become line NCO's

85%

...Among other Privates

51%

**THE SUPERIOR INFANTRYMAN WAS MORE LIKELY TO FEEL THAT WHAT HE WAS DOING IN THE ARMY WAS WORTHWHILE**

QUESTION: "Do you usually feel that what you are doing in the Army is worthwhile or not?"

PER CENT SAYING IT IS WORTHWHILE...

...Among Privates who were destined to become line NCO's

75%

...Among other Privates

52%

**THE SUPERIOR INFANTRYMAN TENDED TO HAVE A MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS OFFICERS**

QUESTION: "How many of your officers are the kind that always look out for the welfare of their enlisted men?"

PER CENT SAYING "ALL" OR "MOST OF THEM"...

...Among Privates who were destined to become line NCO's

68%

...Among other Privates

50%

**THE SUPERIOR INFANTRYMAN TENDED TO HAVE A MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS NONCOMS**

QUESTION: "How many of the noncoms you now serve under are the kind you would want to serve under in combat?"

PER CENT SAYING "ALL" OR "MOST OF THEM"...

...Among Privates who were destined to become line NCO's

75%

...Among other Privates

47%

**SOME OTHER DIFFERENCES**

As another part of the study, line noncoms in the two regiments (assumed to be the best enlisted Infantrymen) were compared with privates and pfc's on such factors as education, AGCT scores, physical characteristics and mechanical aptitude.

The noncoms were generally found to have more education, intelligence and mechanical aptitude and to be slightly taller and heavier than the privates and pfc's.

In all the above cases, however, the differences between noncoms and privates and pfc's were small. It was evident

that the most striking differences between the two groups were in their morale attitudes. *On the five attitudes charted in this report, for example, the differences range from 34 to 18 per cent.*

Since, by the very nature of things, officers must rely on men's performance records in making promotions, the above findings indicate that superior morale is related to superior performance. The officers had no sure way of knowing the specific morale attitudes of the men they selected to be line NCO's. It is significant that the men they chose were generally higher on these attitudes than the men they passed over.

# "BLACK SHEEP" IN BATTLE

**A majority of officers and men say their outfit's leading guardhouse tenant turns out well in front line combat**

*Source: Study of enlisted men and company-grade officers in an Infantry division which saw action in the Pacific.*

There are two schools of thought on the question of how well disciplinary offenders turn out in combat. One school holds that most of them cannot be trusted to do a good job under fire. The other holds that when the chips are down, most guardhouse tenants are satisfactory fighting men.

The latter point of view is supported by a recent study in which about three-quarters of the officers and men questioned say that the soldier in their outfit who had the longest guardhouse record was at least as good as the average soldier in combat action.

The following table indicates how these officers and men rated the battle performance of their outfit's worst disciplinary offender:

**QUESTION:** "...Think of the one man in your unit who served time the most in the guardhouse. How did he do in battle compared to other men in the platoon?"

| Per cent of officers and<br>enlisted men saying... | ENLISTED |     |
|--|----------|-----|
|  | OFFICERS | MEN |
|  | %        | %   |
| Much better than average. . .                      | 7        | 11  |
| Better than average . . . . .                      | 22       | 15  |
| Same as average . . . . .                          | 42       | 53  |
| Worse than average. . . . .                        | 12       | 5   |
| Much worse than average . . .                      | 3        | 3   |
| Any other answer. . . . .                          | 10       | 3   |
| No answer . . . . .                                | 4        | 10  |

The fact that this opinion of the battle performance of guardhouse tenants is not limited to officers and men with combat experience in one area is borne

out by testimony of officers who saw action in another area. These officers concur almost absolutely with the judgment expressed in the table.

This opinion cannot be taken as recommendation by the officers and men that combat units be made dumping grounds for men with bad records.

In the first place, the worst disciplinary offenders were, in the main, not under consideration. The officers and men were simply rating the battle performance of the worst offenders *among those who reached the battle front*. It may well be argued that the guardhouse inmates who saw combat were a selection of the very best men who had ever got into trouble with Army law.

In the second place, it is probable that officers and men expected little of these offenders. A guardhouse veteran who actually was poorer than average in combat might have been rated average or better simply because he behaved better than he was expected to.

But even when we consider all these limitations, the fact remains that most of the men with guardhouse records who survived pre-battle screening seem to have earned the respect of their fellows.

While it must be granted that the disciplinary offender may have character or personality drawbacks that tend to make him a bad man to have around, combat performance is such an important part of a soldier's service that the following conclusion from the figures opposite seems justified:

If a soldier has a bad record, yet you or your senior officers feel he has enough value to his unit to be carried into action, give him a chance to prove himself. The odds are good that he will prove a useful fighting soldier.

# SOLDIERS IN OUTLYING BASES

## The G. I. seems quite adept at adjusting to life in an inactive theater far from home

*Source: Study of a cross section of enlisted men in an inactive tropical area overseas.*

What happens to morale when men are stationed for long periods in an inactive tropical theater far away from home?

One idea held by many people is that morale deteriorates rapidly under such conditions and that it tends to get lower the longer men are so stationed.

A study of a cross section of enlisted men stationed in just such an area throws a good deal of light on the subject.

The study supports the following conclusions:

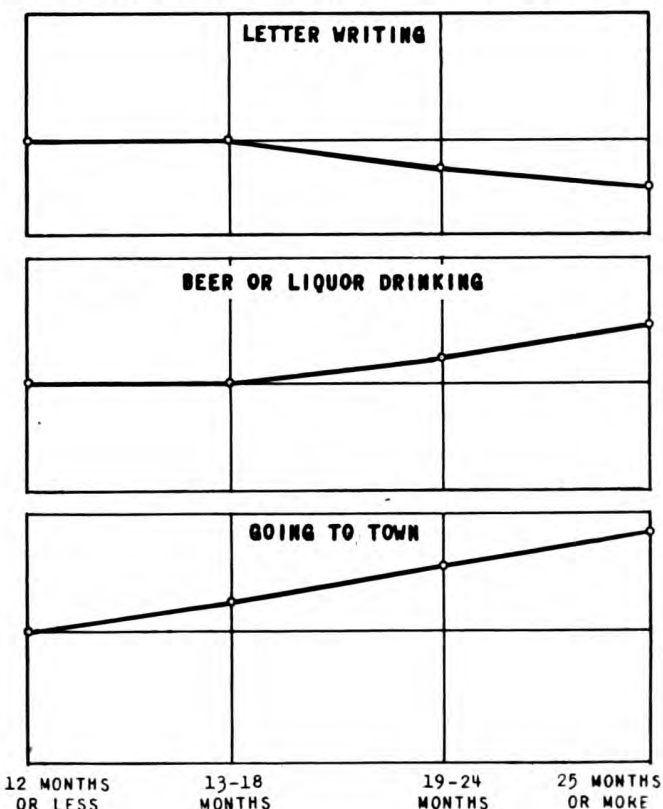
1. Though there is a tendency for morale to deteriorate when men are in an inactive theater, the fears expressed about rapid deterioration are somewhat exaggerated.
2. Though length of service in such a theater tends to have only slight effect on men's general morale, it does have stronger effect on some of their leisure-time habits.

As the chart opposite shows, the longer men are stationed in an inactive theater, the more likely they are to spend their off-duty time going to town, and drinking beer, and the less likely they are to write letters home. The same trend holds true for still another leisure-time activity--having dates with women.

It may well be argued that because leisure-time activities may reflect the general quality of men's morale that increased drinking and decreased letter writing are indications of lowered morale. Certainly, the decline in letter writing gives some cause for alarm insofar as it indicates a kind of growing

apathy among the men. It is this kind of apathy which often leads to a general let-down in men's efficiency.

### HOW LENGTH OF SERVICE IN A THEATER AFFECTS CERTAIN LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES\*



### NO EFFECT ON OTHER OFF-DUTY ACTIVITIES

Length of service in an inactive area seems to have no effect whatsoever on the following leisure-time activities:

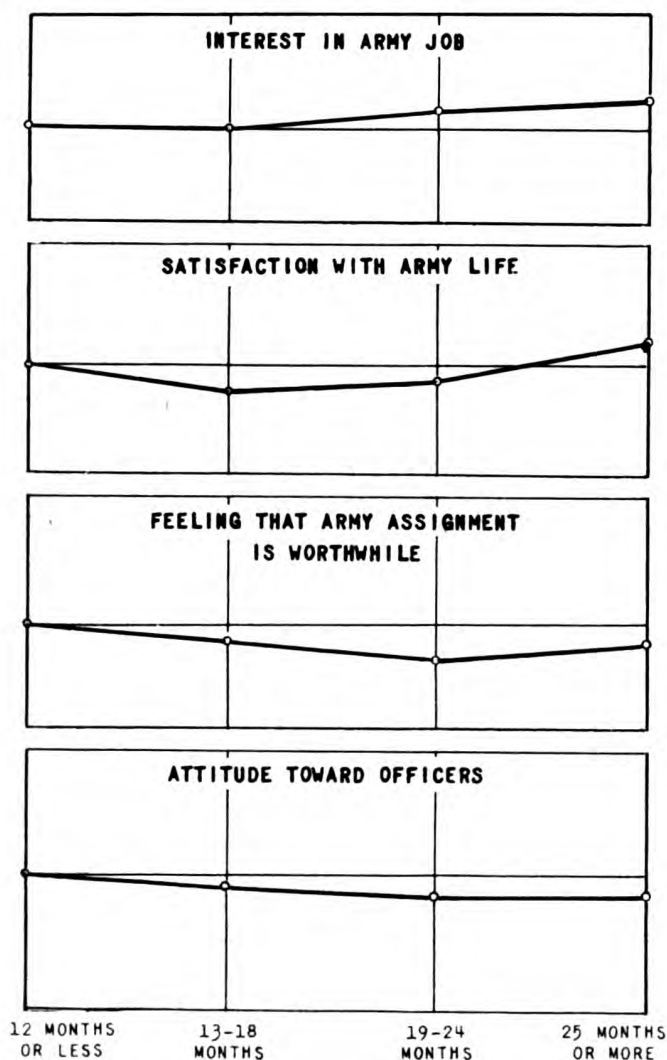
1. Book and magazine reading habits.
2. Movie attendance.
3. Card playing and other indoor activities.
4. Indoor and outdoor sports activities.

\*In plotting these indexes, activities of men with 12 months service or less have been used as a base line.

In addition, as the chart below shows, there is no significant difference between men with long service and men with short service on such morale-related factors as the following:

1. Extent of interest in Army job.
2. Satisfaction with Army life.
3. Feeling that their job assignments are worthwhile.
4. Attitude toward officers.

#### HOW LENGTH OF SERVICE IN A THEATER AFFECTS CERTAIN MORALE-RELATED ATTITUDES\*



\*In plotting these indexes, attitudes of men with 12 months of service or less have been used as a base line.

These findings by no means complete the picture. On several morale-related items, men with the longest service in the area seem to have attitudes superior to those with shorter service.

For example, they are more likely to express preference for their soldier roles as against being civilian workers in war industries. On this latter factor alone, 23 per cent more of the men with two years of service in the area or more prefer the soldier role than prefer it among those men with one year of service or less.

#### COMPANY PUNISHMENT

Perhaps the one instance in which there is positive evidence of a kind of morale deterioration among men with long service in the area is in the recency that men have received company punishment. Fifteen per cent of the men with two years or more service in the area say they received company punishment within the past six months; only nine per cent of those with one and a half years of service or less say they received such punishment.

#### SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

It cannot be denied that--as far as over-all policy is concerned--men should not be kept too long in an inactive tropical theater. Discipline tends to suffer under such conditions, and men get sloppy in their habits. In this theater, the men themselves are conscious of this fact. Almost half the men with two years of service or more say that they would like to see more emphasis on neatness of dress and that orders should be given in a more military manner.

On the other hand, there seems little reason to fear that men kept for long periods in such a theater fall apart at the seams. The evidence seems to be that most soldiers try to make whatever adjustments they can to the life they are forced to live.

# HOW THE STUDIES ARE MADE

The articles in this bulletin are based on attitude surveys conducted by the Research Branch, Morale Services Division and the research units reporting to the commanding generals of the several theaters.

The staff of the Research Branch is composed of Army officers who are experienced in the field of surveys, together with a number of civilian specialists. Techniques have been developed, tested and adjusted to fit the Army's problems.

The basic steps in conducting a study are as follows:

1. The questionnaire is prepared in consultation with the War Department branches, or the theater command immediately concerned. Questions are carefully chosen to provide the exact type of information desired.
2. The questionnaire is pre-tested. That is, the questions are tried out on small groups of men to determine whether they are meaningful and understandable to the type of men or officers to be studied.
3. The project is cleared for action with the commands in which the study is to be made.
4. The number of men to be surveyed is set sufficiently large to insure statistically reliable findings.
5. The men to be surveyed are selected to insure as true a cross section of the group to be studied as possible. A cross section of enlisted men in the United States, for example, is so drawn as to give proper proportionate representation to each branch of the Army, to men in each stage of training, and to men stationed in the various sections of the country. It is, of course, possible to get cross sections of a single branch, of a division, of Negro troops, or any other portion of the Army desired.
6. The men complete questionnaires under conditions of absolute anonymity. They are assembled in small groups, and hear a short introduction given by a specially trained class leader. This introduction makes it clear to the men that only their frank opinion is wanted, and that they are not being tested or spied on. If the group is composed of enlisted men, the class leader is an enlisted man, and no officers are present during the session. No names or serial numbers are placed on the questionnaires. Ordinarily, illiterates or men of very low intelligence are interviewed by specially trained enlisted men.
7. The data are analyzed by specialists in attitude research analysis. Reports of these analysts are released to agencies concerned, and also form the basis for the material presented in this bulletin.

The procedure outlined above is that followed in the typical cross section survey. Other techniques, of course, are employed from time to time in special situations.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The findings in this digest are based, in most cases, upon broad studies of general problems conducted by the Research Branch, Morale Services Division, ASF. The purpose is to provide commanders with information which will assist them in evaluating the status of morale. The applicability of these general findings to the specific situation of any given command will vary greatly. It is probably true that no commander will be able to apply all the findings to his problems, but it is equally probable that any commander will find some material of practical use to him.

The report is designed to be useful primarily to commanders of regiments and smaller units. Some of the problems discussed concern problems that require the direct intervention of the regimental commander and his staff. Others offer suggestions on matters that clearly call for action at the battalion, company or platoon level. Some of the data has relevance to all Army situations, while other data are significant only in certain branches or certain special situations.

## HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The following are suggestions for the maximum use of this report by regimental and battalion commanders:

1. *Make sure that the report is studied by every staff officer concerned with personnel, training, or morale. Much of what it contains will only confirm their own personal observations, but there will be something new in it for even the most experienced officer.*
2. *If mimeographing facilities are available, reproduce those sections which apply particularly to company officers' problems, and distribute copies to every company officer, retaining the restricted classification. The charts are easy to copy. Perhaps you can point up the data to specific problems of your command by use of illustrative material from your own experience.*
3. *If lack of facilities prevents reproduction, your orientation officer may make use of this material in talks to junior officers, using a blackboard if possible. Officers new to command may be uninfluenced by mere advice from their more experienced elders; they cannot and will not ignore plain evidence, supported by figures, which demonstrates that their success or failure as leaders in training or in battle depends on certain fundamental habits and practices which can be acquired by study and which will win the respect and confidence of their men.*